

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 15, 17-27 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. After entry of this amendment, claims 1-14, and 28-29 will remain pending in the application.

Entry of the Amendment is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116 as the amendments: (a) place the application in condition for allowance for the reasons discussed herein; (b) do not present any new issues that would require further consideration and/or search as the amendments merely amplify issues discussed throughout the prosecution; (c) do not present any additional claims without canceling a corresponding number of claims; and (d) place the application in better form for appeal, should an appeal be necessary. Entry of the Amendment is thus respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication by the Examiner that claims 1-14, and 28-29 are allowed.

Claim 23 was objected to by the Examiner. Claim 23 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the objection to claim 23.

Claims 17, 19, and 23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Moriyama *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 4,798,470) (Moriyama).

Claims 17, 19 and 23 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claims 17, 19 and 23.

Claims 17-19 and 23-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) based on Yoichi (JP 1164032).

Claims 17-19 and 23-25 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claims 17-19 and 23-25.

Claims 17, and 19-26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) based on Sogard *et al.* (U.S. Pat. No. 6,376,329) (Sogard).

Claims 17, and 19-26 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claims 17, and 19-26.

Claims 15 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Moriyama.

Claims 15 and 27 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claims 15 and 27.

Claim 27 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Yoichi.

Claim 27 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claim 27.

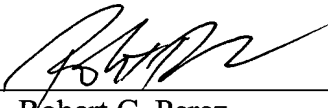
Claims 15 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) based on Sogard.

Claims 15 and 27 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, thus rendering moot the rejection of claims 15 and 27.

In view of the foregoing, the claims are now believed to be in form for allowance, and such action is hereby solicited. If any point remains in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, please contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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